

Application Serial No. 10/760,363
Reply to Office Action of 12/26/07

REMARKS

Claims 7 - 9 and 12 - 14 remain pending in this application. Claims 1 - 6, 11 and 16 - 41 were withdrawn from consideration, and claims 10 and 15 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 7 and 9 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as his invention.

The present amendment to claim 7 relates to associating the position of a "feature," to which the movable body is to be guided, with a guidance position based on unique mesh information assigned to sub-areas. (The specification explains that a *feature* " may include ... [a] convenience store or a gas station, a guide plate, a sightseeing spot ...)

The Summary (page 6, line 17) explains that

A navigation method according to a ninth aspect of the present invention provides guidance on a feature by a computing section when a movable body is moved to a predetermined guidance position located ahead of the position of the feature in a moving direction of the movable body toward the feature. The navigation method includes the steps of: acquiring a feature guidance information including a *unique* feature information associated with the respective features, a *unique* guidance position information respectively associated with the guidance position of the feature, and a *unique* mesh information associated with a sub-area representing the feature position and the guidance position, the sub-area being divided from an area representing the feature position and the guidance position according to the positional relationship shown in a map so that each sub-area includes *at most* one of the feature and the guidance position, the unique mesh information associated with the unique feature information or the unique guidance position information to represent the position of the feature or the guidance information; and providing guidance on the feature by recognizing that the movable body is positioned at the guidance position of the feature based on the feature guidance information and the current position information [*emphasis added*].

The specification at page 21, line 19, further explains that

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...in Fig. 9A, an area M, on which the feature position A and the guidance position B are represented on the map as shown in Fig. 9B each sub-area Mx contains **at most** the feature position A or the guidance position B, so that each sub-area Mx defines the feature position A and the guidance position B. More specifically, as shown in Fig. 9B, the feature position A is represented as a **unique** mesh information, i.e., "C6" ... and the guidance position B is represented as a **unique** mesh information, i.e., "F2" The above-described information are respectively associated with the unique mesh information, i.e., "C6" and "F2" recorded as one data, and the plurality of feature guidance information are stored on the storage section 440 in table structure form [*emphasis added*].

These support the present claim amendments, which is discussed below. In response to the Action:

§ 112. Claims 7, 9 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention (Office Action page 3, item 7). Claims 7 and 9 are amended in view of the Examiner's remarks. (Claim 14 was rejected only for dependence.) Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

§ 102. Claims 7-9 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Fujita et al., USP No. 5,513,110. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 7 recites

A navigation device that provides a position of a feature in a positional relationship shown in a map and a guidance on the feature when a movable body is moved to a predetermined guidance position located ahead of a current position in a moving direction of the movable body toward the feature, the device comprising:

....

feature guidance information including a unique feature information associated with each feature, a unique guidance position information associated with each guidance position related to the feature, and a unique mesh information corresponding to the position of the feature and the guidance position, the unique mesh information being assigned to a plurality of

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sub-areas divided in a matrix so that only one position of the feature or of the guidance position is contained in and associated with the unique feature information and the unique guidance position information to provide a single data structure storing a plurality of data set,

wherein the guidance providing section, when the movable body moving along the movement path reaches a position corresponding to one of the sub-areas corresponding to the feature guidance information, recognizes that the movable body is located at the guidance position represented by the unique mesh information associated with the sub-area to provide the guidance on the feature associated with the guidance position.

Fujita. Fujita discloses subdividing a grid at col. 4, lines 55-58, and nodes (road intersections) that are “uniquely identified” (col. 5, line 3). Fujita uses a hierarchy of road types to plan a path (Figs. 3A-3B and col. 12, lines 51-59) and employs a strategy of searching the road hierarchies sequentially (col. 13, lines 4-13). All this is done to get from the “current point ... to a destination point” (Abstract, lines 9-10).

Guidance Position. The Examiner applies Fujita’s destination point against the Applicant’s claimed “feature” (line 6 of ¶ 9 on page 4), but in regard to the claimed “guidance position” the Examiner appears to apply numerous, and diverse, elements of the reference. The Examiner associates the guidance position with:

- a succeeding intersection (line 8 of ¶ 9 on page 4);
- # 606 in Fig. 6, which asks about the destination point (line 13 of ¶ 9 on page 4);
- the current position (page 5, lines 3-4);
- a “path” of Figs. 6-10, which are flowcharts and depict no path (page 5, line 10).

As to the claimed “guidance *information*,” this is asserted to be anticipated by Fujita’s destination point (line 5 of ¶ 9 on page 4 and page 5, lines 2-5), an element which is also applied against the Applicant’s guidance *position*. The Examiner makes further assertions that the Applicant does not understand, such as “a guidance position of the feature guidance information

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based on the acquired feature guidance information,” which is asserted to be supported by control being stopped when the end point is reached.

The Applicant respectfully submits that none of the elements of Fujita anticipates the claimed guidance position. Even if Fujita’s road intersections were to anticipate the claimed “feature” (not admitted), there is no disclosure of anything that announces the next intersection, or otherwise provides guidance information, *at a predetermined point before that intersection*, associated with a mesh element. Fujita only discloses choosing a path to the end point and does not announce each intersection, or indeed any.

Unique Mesh Information. One of the features of the present invention is that unique feature information and unique guidance information are each associated with unique mesh information, and the guidance providing section provides guidance on a feature when it is recognized that the movable body has reached a sub-area associated with the feature guidance position represented by unique mesh information.

This feature is not taught in the cited reference.

Fujita merely teaches a map data storage that stores road data segmented for predetermined management areas in a hierarchical manner, according to the type of road. A route from the current position to the destination is searched sequentially (from broader hierarchy to narrower one) for each of the hierarchical management areas based on the distance between the departure point to the destination (see Figs 4A-4D). It appears that some “dividing” of the map area can be observed in the reference; however, the Applicant does not find any ID number (matching mesh information) assigned to the management areas.

There is no disclosure of uniqueness.

In sum, one feature of the present invention, i.e. associating the position of the feature (to which the movable body is to be guided) with the guidance position based on unique mesh information assigned to sub-areas, is neither taught nor suggested in the cited reference.

The rejection of the dependent claims is traversed, *inter alia*, on the basis above.

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In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (571-273-8300) on March 26, 2008.

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